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Souls Worth and Danger,

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DISCOURSE

Exciting and directing to the Due
Care of its Eternal Salvation ;

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S A V I O U R :

*S^t Mat. 16. 26. What is a man profited,
if he shall gain the whole World and
lose his own Soul? Or what shall a
man give in exchange for his Soul?*

C A M B R I D G E.

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T H E

Souls Worth and Danger.

S^t Mat. 16. 26. What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul?



Our Saviour *v. 24.* tells the Apostle *Peter*, and all other his faithful disciples; that rather then deny him, they must deny themselves for his sake; and that so far as should be needful, they must take up their Cross, and follow him. In all which they must not be hindred, 1. with the *loss of life*, for, says he, *v. 25.* the words before the Text, *Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, &c.* nor 2. should they be hindred with the *loss of reputation*, for, says he, *v. 27.* the words immediately

atly following the text, *The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, and reward every man according to his works*; and then there shall be a resurrection of their names, as well as of their persons. Nor 3. should the loss of the world hinder them, for says he in the words of the text it self, *What is a man profited though he should gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul?* The question is put so as to include a strong denial: *What is a man profited?* That is, he is not profited at all. And again, *what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul?* that is, there is nothing that he can give in exchange for it. And therefore our Saviour is to be understood, as if he had said, They that will disobey me, may 'tis true be gainers in the world for a while, but if they should be gainers of the whole world, their gains would not be so great as their loss, the incomparable, invaluable, irrecoverable loss of their precious Souls. *Job 27. 8. What is the hope of the Hypocrite, though he hath gained:* (though he hath gained never so much) *when God taketh away his Soul?* For as it is *Psal. 49. 6, 8, 17. He that trusted and boasted in his wealth here, when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away, his glory shall not descend after him.* Or if it might, it would not buy his pardon, or be a sufficient

ransome to God. *For the redemption of the Soul is precious, and (therefore thus) ceaseth for ever.*

Whence we may observe, as the subject of the following discourse, *That each ones Soul is to them, more worth then the World.* Or, *that they will be exceeding great losers that lose their own Souls, though it should be by the gaining of the whole World.* And this may be made out, by considering first, what it is to gain the World; and the worthlessness thereof though gained; and next, by shewing what it is to lose the Soul; and the preciousness of that if lost.

First therefore as to the *gaining of the world*, we are to remember that

1. By the world, as *S^t John* 1. 10. is sometimes meant, the *whole visible fabrick* of the heavens we breath in, and the earth we tread upon; and thus the Text must be understood only by way of supposition; for otherwise neither *Ahasuerus*, nor *Alexander*, nor any the greatest Conqueror ever gained so much, as to become absolute Master of the whole earthly Globe.

2. By the world may sometimes, as *S^t John* 15. 19. be meant the *wicked of the world*. And so, but too many think they have gained what they most desire, if they may but enjoy

the frequent Society of the most lewd and wicked people; concerning whom says *Saint Hieron: Discamus Sanctam superbiam, & sciamus nos esse illis meliores.* As if he should have said, Let us Christians learn an holy pride, and (as it may be without any Pharisee-like boasting) let us know our selves *too good* for the Company of such infectious lepers of the world.

3. By the world may here be Chiefly meant the *things of the world*, worldly profits, honours, and pleasures; As *1 John. 2. 16. The lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, the pride of life.*

And so with some to *gain the world*, is by men-pleasing or time serving, by flatteries or briberies to get *honours and preferment* in the world. Not a few being willing to give away the world in this sense, to gain it in another.

Again with others, to *gain the world*, is by immodest apparelling, or inticing behaviour, or by the frequent use of unseasonable and immoderate recreation, or by luxurious and riotous living to get the *sinful sensual pleasures of the world.*

And further with the most, to *gain the world*, is to get the *wealth and profits* thereof, by covetousness, or by oppression & extortion, or
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by fraudulent unrighteous dealing ; or by abusing a lawful calling ; or using that which is unlawful, so as to live much upon the sins of others, in furthering their pride, or idleness, or prodigality, or quarrellousness, or wanton lewdness, or beastly drunkenness or the like.

In a word, to *gain the world* in this sense, is by *any undue means* to get whatsoever in the world the heart of carnal wretches can most desire, and which is *as a world* to them. Between whom and sincere Christians there is always this vast difference ; Good and faithful Christians seek the favour and fruition of God in Christ, and their own Souls salvation, as their *main end* ; and in order thereunto, make *religion their business* ; and all worldly things, even which may be innocently used, with them come in *but on the by* ; so as, if it shall seem good to God, they can either *have them*, or be *without them*. Whereas to carnal people that lose their Souls in the pursuit of the world, their *main end is*, the pleasing of the flesh thereby some way or other, which their sex, age, education, constitution of body, or condition of life most tempts and leads them to. And with them, *Religion, that comes in but on the by* ; and if they need it not for a pretence, they can most easily be without it.

Yet after all, when such people have, with the contempt of Gods service, the wounding of their consciences, and the abuse of their pretious Souls, gotten the most they can of the world; at the last they are forced by their own sad Experience to confess the *vanity* and *worthlesness* of it.

'Tis true these outward worldly things, as they *proceed from God*, and may *lead to him*; as they may fit men for great offices, and noble employments; as they may be used for our own and others wellfare, and as they are a means to sustain us in this life, while we are seeking after eternal life, so they are the good blessings of God, which we may labour after, and ought to be thankful for. But as they are *abstracted from God*, and inordinately loved, sought, and trusted in, so they have this *five-fold vanity*, which is but too easily discovered in them, namely, their unsatisfactoriness, their commonness, their deceitfulness, their unsuitableness, and unprofitableness.

1. That which speaks the little worth, but great vanity of worldly things, is their *unsatisfactoriness*. *Ahab* had the possession of a wealthy Kingdome, and yet for want of *Naboths* vineyard only, how was he heart-sick,
so as

so as to take no content in all his other enjoyments? *1 Kings 21. 4.* In like manner, to what a wonderful height of dignity and earthly happiness was *Haman* advanced, and yet how did so inconsiderable a thing, as the want of poor *Mordecai's* knee, damp all the delights of his proud heart? *Esther 5. 11, 12, 13.*

Knock at the door of the Choicest earthly possessions, and they will tell you one by one, *sufficiency is not in me.* The creature if parted from God, is empty, and the Soul too; and what fulness can be had by adding one emptiness to another? Many a poor man hath thought; *if I had but enough to supply such necessities, and discharge such debts, how cheerfully would I serve the Lord without distraction, and not care so much for the world any more?* But when these desires have been granted, they have found themselves still unsatisfied; being ready now to thirst as much after *fulness*, as before after *necessaries*.

It is God only who is *All-sufficient*, both as to his *own happiness*, and *our satisfaction*, *Gen. 17. 1.* It is Christ the uncreated Wisdom, *Prov. 8. 21.* *Who fills the treasures of those that love him, and causeth them to inherit substance.* And if he do not make God ours, as well as the creature, our condition will be but like theirs

theirs mentioned *Haggai 1. 6.* *Ye have sown much, and bring in little: Ye eat, but ye have not enough: Ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink: ye clothe you, but there is none warm: and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.* Solomon that was so rich to compass all worldly accommodations, and so wise to find out what was best in them to be enjoyed; after a full experience, tells us, that if they lead not to God, they will be but *vanity and vexation of Spirit.*

2. How doth the *Commonness* of these worldly things abate the value of them? *Eccl. 9. 1, 2.* *They come alike to all, and none can certainly know by them either love or hatred; whether they be the friends or enemies of God.* You cannot say, *God gives me poverty, therefore he hates me; or he gives me riches, therefore he loves me;* such conclusions are weak and deceitful. For the good may be afflicted as well as the bad, and sometimes undergoe the heaviest burden of earthly trouble. *Luke 16. 15.* And on the other hand, the wicked may flourish for a while as well as the righteous, and sometimes enjoy the greatest measure of worldly prosperity. *Psal. 17. 13, 14.*

Renewing grace is a certain sign of Gods favour,

favour, and a *special distinguishing mercy*, and therefore highly to be esteemed, and earnestly sought after; but outward comforts, common natural gifts, and acquired abilities, as a fair estate, an healthful body, a faithful memory, a quick understanding, a ready utterance, or the like; these, though blessings in themselves, yet are but *blessings of the left hand*, such as are given to the *heathen Idolater*, as well as to the *Christian Worshipper*, to the *clean and unclean*, to him that sacrificeth and him that sacrificeth not. And therefore this their commonness shews much of their vanity and worthlessness.

3. How is there in worldly things a vanity of *deceitfulness* which also speaks them less valuable? How many people come to the world as to a lottery, looking for a prize, but go away cheated with a blank? How often doth the world by *promising much*, and *performing little*, first abuse our Judgements, and then frustrate our hopes and expectations?

Have you not sometimes found creature-confidences, like the trusting in the *Staff of a brokenreed*, whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it? *Isa. 36. 6.* Have you not sometimes enjoyed the pleasures of sin for a season, and flattered your self with the
long

long continuance of them? Whereas that season is gone, and never returns again. Can you not remember what happiness you may have promised your self in such a friend, such a purchase, such a preferment, but some *unexpected disappointment* or other, some Crosse or other, hath much embittered them unto you, and lessened your comfort in their enjoyment?

The *mutability* of the world is the great deceit of it; which that we may avoid, let us duly consider what the Apostle hath written, *I Tim. 6. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 19.* And again *I Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31.* Oh let us not suffer our selves to be imposed upon, counting that to *continue long*, which he, according to the experience of all, tells us shall abide but a *short while* and then *pass away*.

Oh let us not think with them *I sa. 56. 12.* what carnal delights we will have *this day*, and *to morrow much more abundant*. Oh let us not say with him *S^t Luke 12. 19, 20.* *Soul take thine ease, eat drink, be merry, thou hast much goods layd up for many years.* Least we be awakened with that terrible voice of God, saying, as unto him; *Thou fool this night thy Soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*

Why

Why should we inordinately set our hearts and affections on that which *is not* ? for as *Prov. 23. 5. Riches* (honours, pleasures) *make themselves wings and fly away*. When we think our selves *most* sure of them, when we trust most in them, when by the abuse of them, we are become most proud, stomackful, secure and negligent of Gods service, then are we most *sadly deceived*, then the wing of prodigality, of oppression, of casualty sweeps them from us; or else the wing of death carries us away from them in a moment.

But suppose the world to *perform more* than it *promiseth*, and that we could be sure of it for a very considerable while; yet have we not immortal Souls to provide for? Have we not matters of *life* or *death* to look after? And what can all the world be to *this*? Oh therefore how nearly doth it concern us to *lay up in store for our selves a sure foundation for the time to come*; to anchor our Souls upon Christ the *rock of ages* who will never deceive us; and not to hazard them for any thing, in this worthless, because deceitful and changeable, world.

4. That which further shews the worthlessness of the things of the world, is their vanity of *unsutableness* in respect of the precious Soul.

Soul. Those are *corporeal* and *fading*, this is *spiritual* and *immortal*. Those are limited and finite beings, this a substance of unbounded desires, and can be *fully satisfied* with nothing but communion with the Father, and the Son through the Spirit; with nothing but a state of grace and salvation, and the fruition of God.

All that worth which silver and gold, and such worldly things have, is not so much in their *own nature*, as from *our esteem*, or from some outward *humane appointment*; but we can never thus make them equally excellent with our selves.

'Tis true, by a wilful slavery to sin, we may (as the Prophet speaks, *Jerem. 6. 30.*) *turn our selves into brasse, and iron, and reprobate silver*; we may unman and unchristian our selves; we may undervalue and debase our Souls, blotting out the image of God, and writing upon them the superscription of earth and the world; Thus indeed, the *Epicure* may greatly delight in sensual pleasures, and the *ambitious mind* in flattering titles, and the *frothy wit* in abusive lightness; Thus, 'tis true, carnal and worldly things, to carnal, and worldly hearts may become but too sutable, dear, and precious. But the desires of a gracious heart
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are after *higher and better things*. For every faithful Christian considers that God hath made even our bodies upright, and our faces lifted from the earth; that we might conceive how far from it, our *heaven-born Spirits* should be elevated towards himself, and Christ, and heavenly Glory, which are therefore *most excellent*, because *most proportionable* and *sutable* to our Souls, in their utmost capacities.

5. And lastly, the worthlessness of the world appears by its *unprofitableness*. As *Samuel* said to the people, *1 Sam. 12. 20, 21. Turn ye not aside from serving and following the Lord; for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit, because they are vain.* Too many indeed are ready to think the profits of the world worth their gaining, even by the loss of their consciences, of heaven, and God himself. And as for those who make conscience of their waies, and endeavour to walk circumspectly, closely, and humbly with God; who scrupulously forbear *prophane rash oaths* and idle discourse, who are sensible of the least *secret sin*, who avoid what they can all occasions and *appearances of evil*, who withstand the corruptions of the *times* and *places* they live in, though they gain less in the world; these are often accounted, such as know not
what

what is best for themselves. But *S^r Paul* assures us, that such *Godliness with contentment is the truest gain* ; whereas the world, when you have spent all your thoughts, and the labour of your lives upon it ; though it may further you in some *lesser respects* , yet it cannot profit you in the *main thing necessary*.

It cannot procure us the favour of God, who *regardeth not the rich man more then the poor, for they are all alike the work of his hands*. He accounts of all, not according to their meanness, or greatness, but according to their real piety and goodness; *Prov. 19. 1. Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, then he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool. Prov. 28. 6. Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, then he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich*. Observe, They are the poor that walk in their integrity, that know, love, and serve God; not that kind of poor who are *grossely ignorant and neglectful* of God, and who lead sensual, sloathful, and heathenish lives; though they *above others*, might be most easily convinced of the *emptiness* and *unprofitableness* of the world, and so have greater care of their *Souls salvation*, seeking out after God in Christ to supply their Spiritual necessities, that it may be better with them in the life to come.

Again,

Again, the world cannot ease the pain of an *afflicted conscience*; nor can it give us the grace we want. Ordinarily 'tis so abused, that it makes people not more *thankful*; but more *forgetful* of God; nor doth it (as it ought) draw their hearts nearer to God, but sets them at a further distance from him; nor doth it make them *more humble*, but *more haughty*; nor more constant and sincere in duties, but more unfit for any good word or work.

Nor can the world *profit* us in the *day of wrath*. When the sinful pleasures of youth are ended by sickness, age, or death, what can be left, but the *worm of conscience* bred out of them to torment the Soul for ever?

Have you not sometimes considered with your self, how soon the world and its pleasures will turn you off? How can you but now and then take notice of your *own frailties* which tell you, how *certainly* and *shortly* you must lie down in the dust? Do you not sometimes go to the house of mourning, or stand by *dying people*, confessing the world to be nothing worth, and complaining of the losse of their time and strength spent upon it? And do you not see how *little* it doth for them in their *greatest need*? Oh therefore let this prevail with us to prize our Souls above the world, let

this (with what hath been considered in the foregoing particulars) make us set as *light by it*, as it doth, or will do *by us*. Let us henceforth make Christ our *treasure*, and count it our happiness to honour and worship him as we ought to do. Let us make God *our portion*, and sit down content with him alone, and let them who can get no better, take the world and the pleasures of it.

Having now seen, what it is to gain the world, and the *worthlesnes* thereof though *gained*, we are in the next place to consider, what it is to *lose the Soul*, and the *preciousnes* of that if lost.

As to the *losing of the Soul*, the word *Ζημιωδιναι* here rendred, *to lose*, signifies to have a mulct or punishment inflicted, and so may import, not only the fatal final losse or damnation of the Soul, but also any losse or damage that belongs to it, here or hereafter.

1. Therefore to *lose the Soul* is to *lose ones self*. A mans Soul is the principal part of himself, and so it is in *S^t Luke ch. 9. 25. What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself* (Soul and body too) *and be cast away*.

2. To *lose the Soul* implies a being *deprived of all*

of all further *opportunities* and *seasons of grace*, of all *virtuous* and *gracious endowments*, which are as the *life* of the Soul. When Christ calls by death or Judgement; they that like the foolish virgins, have not *oyl in their lamps*, and *their lamps trimmed*, that have not their Souls adorned with the saving graces of his Spirit; they shall not enter with him. Having waited so long already, and all in vain, he will now stay no longer, *till they go and buy for themselves*, but will shut the door of mercy against them for ever.

3. The *losing of the Soul* implies the *losse* of all such *earthly enjoyments*, as sensual hearts love and prize above their Souls, and for which they undoe themselves for ever. Oh who can express the wretchedness of such people, when they shall stand before the Judgment seat of God, to receive their just doom, in the most *forlorn* and *desolate condition*, stript and forsaken of all carnal comforts, friends, possessions, and outward accommodations whatsoever; which to the hazard of their Souls, they have grasped at, and used in a *sinful way*; and therefore must now lose both the *Soul* and *them too* eternally.

4. The *losing of the Soul* implies the *losing of Christ*, and *Heaven*, and the *blessed Vision of God*

of God for ever. And this indeed is the loss of losses, such as there was never the like before, nor ever can be again after it. The fore-mentioned might be born, but hardly; but this is intollerable. This worst effect of sin, *Depart from me*, or *go away from me*, is as terrible a word, as *everlasting fire*. For alas! Whither shall they go, that go from God, when he alone hath the power of eternal life. Ten thousand words cannot speak a Soul more unhappy, then those two words, *without God*, Eph. 2. 12. Thou mayst be without riches, without friends, without health, without liberty, nay, without all outward blessings, and yet be blessed; but if *without God*, thou art *curst* with a curse.

The hypocrites hell which is the hottest of all other, is set out by this, Job 13. 16. *The hypocrite shall not come before God*. When God would most powerfully *perswade* to dutie, this is his motive, Jerem. 7. 27. *Obey my voice, and I will be your God*. When he would most effectually *diswade* from sin, this is his argument, Jerem. 6. 8. *Be instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my Soul depart from you*. And again Hos. 9. 12. *Wo unto them, when I depart from them*. How sad a saying is that of Sauls, 1 Sam. 18. 15. *I am sore distressed, for the Philistines*

are upon me, and God is departed from me.

How mournfully doth Micah bemoan the loss even of his helpless idols, *Judges 18. 24.* *Ye have taken away my Gods, and what have I more, and what is this ye say unto me, what aileth thee?* How sadly is holy David and our Blessed Saviour afflicted at Gods absence in part, and for a while? *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* says the one. Lord (says the other *Psal. 88. 14, 15.*) *why castest thou off my Soul? Why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted and ready to dye, while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.* Do these so complain of Gods absence in part, and for a while? how bitterly then will the lost Soul complain when forsaken of God utterly and eternally!

Some are ready to say to God, as *Job 21. 24.* *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* They think him sometimes too near them in a Sermon, in a private instruction, in a motion of his Spirit, or in a conviction of conscience; and could wish him, with his holy Laws farther off, that they might sin more securely; but let such beware, least he take them at their word, and give them their wish to their woe, in banishing them everlastingly from his comfortable presence. Oh with what tormenting grief will they then be-

hold those Soul-ravishing delights, which the righteous have in the presence of God, the fountain of all good; whilst they are sentenced to an *eternal separation* from him! How sad and deformed a spectacle is the *body* from which the *Soul* is parted; oh how sad then shall the condition of that Soul be from which God is parted for ever? This though very grievous, yet is not all, for 5. and lastly, the *losing of the Soul* implies further its being brought to the *highest degree* of sin, and consequently to such a *fulness of sorrow*, and such a weight of Gods burning eternal wrath, as no heart can conceive, or tongue express. They that would choose sin, to save themselves from a little trouble or affliction, will find, that now *what they feared, and ten thousand times more* is come upon them.

The wicked could now wish their Souls were *so lost* as to *cease to be*, that they might *cease* to be tormented; but God by his infinite power will both uphold them in their *being*, and make them more sensible of pain then ever, that they may be the subjects of greater punishment.

And now the Conscience of a lost Soul gnaws to think, *so many nights I went to bed prayerless; so many times I swallowed down un-*
lawful

lawful gain ; so many hours I spent in revelling ; foolish sporting , or idle unprofitable talking ; so many opportunities of receiving good at the Lords-supper and other ordinances , I have lost , because I would not prepare for them , nor so much as defile my foot , or endure a little cold or trouble , to be present at them . Oh that I had been more diligent in the practice of religion and holiness ; oh that I had kept the Lords-day better , and been more innocent in my walking all the week after , though a less gainer in the world ; Oh that I had never known such or such a sin , which I loved , lived in , plotted and contrived , and by which I have now wrought my own eternal ruine ; Oh that I had spent but half my mis-spent time in praying , and studying Gods Word , in doing good , and watching over my ways , then had I been yonder in Heaven , but now I must be for ever tormented in these flames .

Thou mayst now so undervalue thy Soul , as to spend much more time upon thy beasts then upon it ; though Truth it self tells us in the Text , that it is *more worth then a world* . But that which is now despised , in hell will be esteemed ; and the damned shall fully know the price of this Pearl , whether they will or no . But it is far better to know and believe it now , that we may be more careful of its preservation .

Consider therefore, I beseech you, in the next place, the *preciousness* of the Soul in these several respects. 1. As to *God our maker*, for did not he at first make it in innocency, after his own glorious image in *knowledge, righteousness, and holiness*, *Gen. 1. 26. Eph. 4. 14. Col. 3. 10.* And ever since, how is it the body of the Child only, the frailer and viler part, which is from the *substance* of the Parents? (as it was at first *formed of the dust of the ground Gen. 2. 7.*) whereas the *precious Soul*, which is of a Spiritual nature, and shall never die, hath its immediate *being* and original from God the *Father of Spirits, Heb. 12. 9. Infundendo creatur, & creando infunditur.*

How is it God only, from whom it is, who can effectually *command the Soul* to subjection? (while the Magistrate can but force the outward man) And God only who can *punish it*? (while man can but kill the body, *S^t Mat. 10. 28.*)

Still even under the *state of corruption*, how is it the Candle of the Lord, and the masterpiece of his creation, shewing the dignity of its nature by its various and noble operations? He that by these knows not what the *Soul is*, knows not what a *man is*. For what is it but the Soul which thus distinguisheth us from brute beasts? What is it but the Soul, by
which

which you are thinking, reading, or asking, *what a Soul is?* What is it but the Soul which is the fountain of *precious life*, and therefore much more precious in it self? *Prov. 6. 26. The adulteress will hunt for the precious life.* The words are נֶפֶשׁ יְקָרָה the *precious Soul*.

What is the Soul but the *rational nature* containing the *sensitive* and *vegetative*; *The Principle* or *first Act* by which we *move, perceive, understand* and *freely will*? And how do these *acts* speak the excellency of the *Powers* from whence they flow! and how do those *Powers* shew the worth of the *Soul* it self?

2. Consider its *Excellency* in relation to *Christ our Redeemer*. What can more clearly demonstrate the preciousness of it, then the greatness of that price which he payd for it? Being willing to lay down his life to deliver the Soul from eternal misery. 1 *St Pet. I. 18, 19.* The Apostle says *we are not redeemed with gold or silver, or any such corruptible things; but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ.*

The more noble the *person* taken captive, the *larger* is the *summe* required for his ransom. Our Saviour in all likelihood would not have done what he did, to keep the whole frame of heaven and earth from being dissolved; but to save those *precious immortal Souls* from

from perishing, which were capable of enjoying so much good from God, and bringing so much glory to him; he was ready, to take our nature, to suffer his Fathers wrath, to live a painful life, and dye an accursed death, by *all which* we may read in most fair and large Characters the worth of the Soul.

3. Consider its excellency in relation to the *Holy Ghost our Sanctifier*. Oh how precious must that needs be, which is cleansed, quickened, and beautified with *precious faith*, as 'tis called, 2 *Pet.* I. 1. And so we may say with precious hope and charity, with precious wisdom, meekness, temperance, patience. Oh the Excellent *supernatural operations* of such a Soul! The *mind* is busie to know God in Christ, and to understand his will revealed in his word. The *memory* thinks of him, the *conscience* stands in awe of him, the *Will* chooseth and embraceth him, the *heart* trusts in him and is set upon him; *The affections* are taken up in loving him, rejoycing in him, fearing to offend him, desiring to please and enjoy him. These are the *truly noble*, and worthy employments of the Soul as redeemed and sanctified, and renewed after the image of God.

4. Consider further its excellency with relation to the *heavenly Angels*. For why should they

they attend us as *ministring spirits*, if our Spirits were not of an excellent angelical nature, and fit to *minister unto God*?

Nay 5. may not the *faln accursed angels*, and *Satan himself* tell us the *worth* of a Soul, by his being so much the enemy of its Salvation, when he *compasseth the earth*, *Job 1. 7.* and *goeth about night and day to devour* and deceive them, *1 Pet. 5. 8.*

6. Why should God, if it were not for our *precious immortal Souls*, give us the *Scriptures*, and an *excellent religion* to shew us the way to happiness? Or why should he in the *Scriptures* dignifie us with such honourable titles, as to be called his *Friends*, his *Children*, to be called the *spouse*, and the *members* of Christ?

7. Why too should *Ministers be appointed by him*, to preach, and pray, and labour for us, if we had not such precious Souls to *save or lose*? *Hebr. 13. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, for they watch for your Souls.* Why should they preach in season and out of season, and be so reviled, and suffer so much to perform their work, but that they know *That he that winneth Souls is wise, Prov. 11. 30.* And that *he which converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a Soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

8. More-

8. Moreover, why should such store of *other mercies* be provided for us? Why should a *world of creatures* (whose corporeal substance seems as excellent as ours) attend and *serve us*, if we were but an ingenious sort of brutes, and had not reasonable immortal Souls more worth than the world? Other Creatures are made for man, and man for God, to glorifie him *by them*, and *for them*.

And surely they have a right estimate of the *Souls worth*, who measure by *it* the *worth* of all *worldly things*; who reckon of their in-comes, their friends, estates, preferments according as they help or hinder them in the service of God; counting them *more* or *less excellent*, as they are *more* or *less subservient* to his honour, and their own or others Souls everlasting happiness.

9. Consider the precious Soul in its *tendency*, which is to an *eternal enjoyment of God*, an infinite good; and that, as fully as humane nature is capable of, and that in a state of absolute perfection. *Intellectus quarit Deum*. The Soul reacheth after God, and this speaks its excellency that he alone can satisfie it. O Lord (says *S^t Augustin*) *thou hast made us for thy self, and our heart is unquiet till it comes unto thy self.*

Here, O Christian, thy weaknesses are thy
grief,

grief, and thy afflictions or meanness may render thee despicable in the eyes of the world, but being *sincerely converted*, thy Soul is in a *tendency* to that happiness, where it shall be enlarged, and perfected to partake the more of God. Where its *best faculties* shall be united to the *best object*, in the best and *fullest manner* to eternal ages. If sincerely converted to God, thy Soul is in a tendency to that illustrious heavenly glory, which is only suitable to it, and which will render far more precious and illustrious, both *it*, and thy *body* too, after the resurrection.

10. Hence we adde one consideration more of the Souls excellency, and that is, in respect of the *body here*. *David* speaking of the body, *Psa.* 139. 14, 15. *O Lord* (says he) *I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my Soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret; and curiously wrought (or imbroydered) in the lowest parts of the earth.* *Galen* more atheistical before, when he came to see the anatomy of mans body, and considered the excellent frame thereof, *Now* (says he) *I adore the God of nature.*

Yet we know the *body* is but the case or *instrument*

strument of the *Soul*, which so far exceeds it, that in many things, with God, the *willingness* and *pure intention* of the *mind* is chiefly lookt at, without which bodily exercise profiteth little. *Though a man give his body to be burnt*, if there be wanting the *charity* of the *Soul*, it *availeth nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. 3.

Nay there are several actions of the *Soul* which are beyond that which concerns the body at all, as the knowing of God, and the life to come, and many notions in *mathematics* and other sciences which are abstracted from bodily substances.

In *adversity*, there may be solid joys in the mind; as there may be real torments upon a mans spirit, which the Primitive Christians and Martyrs being freed from, made little reckoning of their *outward sufferings*, but endured them (as *Sozomen* says) as if *their bodies* had been *other folks*, and *not their own*. In *prosperity* too there may be a power in mans *Soul* to *curb* the body in that which is most suitable and pleasing, which a beast cannot do. 1 Cor. 9. 27. *I keep under my body and bring it into subjection*, St Mat. 18. 8, 9. Prov. 23. 1, 2. *When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee. And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.*

Again,

Again, when the body *faints* with age or sickness, the Soul may have *strong desires* after God and eternity. And when the body *returns to the dust*, the immortal spirit goes to him that gave it to be judged to weal or woe. *I desire* (says the Apostle) *to be dissolved, and be with Christ. Father* (says our Saviour) *into thy hands I commend my spirit*, St Luke 23. 43. and 46. to the penitent thief, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

The *body*, you see then, though curiously wrought or imbroydered, is but the *cabinet* of a more precious Soul, which as was said, is chiefly the man. Oh therefore let us not live as if we were *all of a piece*, and the body was the *man*; as if *that* only was to be adorned, pampered, and provided for. God having given us Souls capable of all those excellencies which he is pleased to impart to the best of his Creatures, let us count them richly worth the *care and labour* of an holy *Christian life*. Far be it from us, to be willing of so much pains for the world, and to call *far less* for the Soul *too much ado*. Far be it from us, to think our precious Souls, no more worth then honour, wealth, or foolish mirth. Oh, far be it from us, to count them so worthless, as to be abused to the basest drudgery, to be poysoned with sin
and

and sensuality, or to be *ventured* for a thing of nought.

But thus you have seen, both what it is to *gain the world*, and what to *lose the Soul*; as also the *worthlesness of the one though gained*, and the *preciousness of the other if lost*; which if you compare, and *duely consider*; you will acknowledge, as our Saviour here hath taught us, *That each ones Soul is of such worth and excellency, that they must needs be exceeding great losers who lose their Souls, though it could be by the gaining of the whole world.* As for the more full and *particular improvement* of this weighty truth, which so nearly concerns every one of us, you may take it in the following *inferences*.

Use 1. Is the Soul of any man or woman whatsoever more worth then a world. Hence then, *O Christian, learn to entertain right thoughts concerning the dignity of thy nature*, and let this 1. make thee hate to dishonour thy self, by thinking, speaking, or doing any thing *unworthy of a rational Soul*, much more of a *Christian*. Let this make thee afraid to live and dye so vilely, as at last with the wicked to wish thou hadst been made a toad or serpent, or that thou hadst never been born.

2. Rather let this consideration make thee
careful

careful to live holily to Gods glory; and so to praise him for thy *Soul*, made capable of so excellent a work, as to love, serve, and honour him here; and of so glorious a reward, as to enjoy him hereafter.

3. Let the same consideration move thee to praise God also for *Christ*, the *Lover of Souls*, who hath done and suffered so much for their eternal welfare; and in him, to praise the Lord, especially for all other Soul-mercies and advantages. Though he should be pleased to keep thee short of other things, say with a thankful heart, as *Eph. 1. 3.* *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* *Gaius* had a Sickly body, but was happy in the prosperous state of his Soul. *Beloved* (says *St John Epistle 3. v. 2.*) *I wish that thou mayst prosper, and be in health, even as thy Soul prospereth.*

4. Let this dignity of thy humane nature help thee to see the dignity of thy holy religion. And remember, though every thing else be mean about thee, yet thy sincere religiousness relating to the precious Soul, is no mean, but an excellent thing; which as *Solomon* says, *makes the righteous more excellent then his neighbour.*

5. Let this further make thee to carry thy self alwaies *humbly* and *courteously* towards the meanest people thou canst meet with; considering, that though thou mayst differ from them in some outward respects, yet they have Souls, which in their own nature, are as precious as thine own.

Use 2. Is the Soul more worth then a world? and shall they be such exceeding great losers that lose their Souls, though by the gaining of the whole world? See then *a great help Christians have to beat back Satans temptations, when tempted to evil, as Eve and our Saviour, by any thing in the world.* Should a Chapman bid thee for any part of thy goods, not so many pence as they are worth pounds; wouldst thou not turn away with scorn from one that offered thee so much to thy loss? Or if but for *thy life*, thou couldst have an *earthly crown*, or the whole world layd in thy hand; wouldst thou not utterly refuse it, knowing it could do thee no good at all when thy life was gone? Wilt thou then exchange thy so *precious Soul* to its eternal undoing, when offered for it but a *morsel of base gain*, or a cup of *stoln pleasure* which will vanish in a moment? Therefore

1. When about to *lye*, *dissemble*, *curse* or
swear

Swear blasphemously, if the next abuse of thy tongue would cost thee the certain loss of that *unruly member*, would not *self-love* make thee refrain from such evil? and wilt thou not do so much more for the *love* of God, and to prevent the loss of thy precious Soul.

Take not his name, who made thy mouth, in vain:

It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse:

Lust and wine plead a pleasure, avarice gain:

But the Cheap Swearer through his open sluice

Lets his Soul runne for nought, as little fearing:

Were I an Epicure, I could bate swearing.

Again 2. when tempted to *drink more then will do thee good*, if one should assure thee that the next needless cup was mixed with deadly poison, thou wouldest certainly refuse it; counting *thy life* more *precious* then to be so vilely cast away; shouldst thou not then much rather, resolutely and constantly avoid such beastly drunkenness; as manifestly endangers the *life* and *happines*s of thy far more *precious Soul*?

3. So when tempted next to *Ale-house gaming* and *stage-plays*, in hopes of a little sordid gain or pleasures; mayst thou not remember how deeply thou makest thy own and others Souls guilty of *abundance* of *sin*, *vanity*, and *prophaneness*; and then think how dear bought thy mirth would be, if that nights laughter

should (as it may for any thing thou knowest) end in *weeping and gnashing of teeth*? As also how little gainer thou wilt be, when thou hast staked and lost, if not the maintenance of thy family; yet, thy time, reputation, and the credit of religion, and therewith the favour of God, the peace of thy conscience, and the happiness of thy Soul.

4. Moreover how powerfully should the same consideration perswade each one to *abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the spirit*, 1 Pet. 2. 11. As also 5. not to covet to be rich in a *sinful way*, because they that do so, *fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows*, 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. And again, *Ferem. 17. 11. As the Partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not: so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.*

The next temptation that comes to draw thee, like *Esaú, Judas, Ahab, or Achan*, to gain some little trifle, or to get some swinish pleasure, Thy conscience may tell thee, that
if thou

if thou dost deliberately commit such a sin ;
 thou dost at the same time , wilfully in a
 manner , sell or pawn thy Soul which is of so
 great value ; or at the best , dost for a small
 matter most sadly venture the loss of it. For
 thou knowst , that the *sin is damning* in its own
 nature ; and thou canst not tell but thou mayst
dye with the guilt of it upon thy conscience ;
 being thou canst not tell , whether God will
 give thee time , or an heart to repent of it or no.

Which of us should not be afraid to consent
 to any *wilful sin* , if we verily thought we
 should *dye presently* upon the *doing* of it ?
 Should the Tempter offer us all the King-
 domes of the world , as a reward of our iniqui-
 ty ; surely we should see sufficient reason , like
 our Saviour , to refuse to fall down and worship
 him , or any ways to yield unto him ; considering
 that by *dying instantly* upon the *deed done* , we
 might lose a Soul , as our Saviour tells us , more
 precious then the world. Or as in an *ancient*
inscription upon a certain monument in this
 Land :

*Who so him bethoft ,
 Inwardly and oft ,
 How hard it were to flit ,
 From bed unto the pit ,
 From pit into pain ,*

*That nere shall cease again,
He would not do one sin,
All the world to win.*

If therefore tempted to any of the fore-mentioned evils, or any other, think seriously with thy self, *would I now do this* if I were to leave this world *presently*, and my Soul call'd to an account as soon as it is done? And then *think further* with thy self, that thus it may be for ought thou knowest; for thus in Gods just judgment it hath been with many a one. Many like *Belshazzar*, *Elah*, or *Amnon* have dyed in the midst of their *drunken Cups*, *Dan. 5. 6.* *1 Kings 16. 9, 10.* *2 Sam 13. 26.* More like *Corah* and his company have been swept away in their rebellious courses either against *Minister* or *Magistrate*. Others like *Zimri* or *Cozbi* have been smitten with death in the act of their *uncleannefs*. Not a few have begun *frivolous* and *malicious law-suits*, and dyed in the prosecution of them. In some peoples mouths, a *lye*, a *curse*, or a *rash oath* have been their *last words*. In other peoples lives, a *fraud* or *oppression* have been their very *last actions*.

Christian Reader, surely this should lay a constant restraint upon thee, and make thee watchful against all vicious practices; least thou be tempted, so to sin against thy own Soul

at any

at *any time*, that on the morrow it will be *too late* to repent thee of it, least on any worldly account, for a thing of nought, thou hazard thy Soul more worth then a thousand worlds. Oh resolve henceforth stedfastly with thy self, however tempted to any destructive *wickedness of life*, by Gods assistance, to keep thy precious Soul *safe and innocent*, whatever thou *gettest*, or whatever thou *losest*, in this worthless and perishing world.

Use 3. Is the Soul so precious, and the loss of it so dreadful? Let this then be further improved to make every *faithful Christian watchful against error in Judgment*, as well as against wickedness of life and conversation. Heresies are reckoned by the Apostle among the *works of the flesh*, Gal. 5. 19, 20. And some are said to be *damnable*, 2 Peter 2. 1, 2, 3. and 2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12. *Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. For this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

This *Use* much concerns thee, if thou livest *near or among Seducers*, who by their often gainsaying in private what thou hearest in publick;

publick; by their interest and familiarity with thee; by their seeming piety and sheeps-cloathing; by their confident assertions and proud pharisaical boastings; by their cunning reasonings, their fair flattering words, or their terrible threats, would bear thee down from truth and unity. But to keep safe thy Soul be intreated to these few things. 1. Forget not how *error* leads to *schism and separation*, which is full of *horrible impiety*. For is not *schism* or *causeless dividing* from the congregations of Christian people; *a breach of peace*; and so a violation of the very Testament of our Lord? *St John* 14. 27. As also of *love*, and so a disowning the Chief badge whereby Christs disciples are known from the infidel world, *St John* 13. 35.

Is not schism further a *subdividing* of the Church into *factions and parties*, who expose and discover each others infirmities to the *wicked*, and to the *common adversary*? so that they are scandalized, and entertain hard thoughts of religion, and of God the Authour of it, and are prejudiced against all the perswasions of the Gospel though designed for their own good. Oh how *heavy an account* will such discredit of religion, such dishonour of God, such frustrating of Christs Gospel-designs, and
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the miscarriage of such a multitude of Souls
amount to!

Again, is it not schism and division that lessens the *Common strength* by dispersing it into many smaller societies? Did those who withdraw from us, joyn with us, and strengthen our hands, (as they may do, and be never the lesse holy, but the more) we might hinder more evil, and more convince the ungodly, and do much more good. But now *separating from us, and speaking all the evil they can against us, and against what we do, they hinder much the work of Christ in our hands, and must sadly answer for it.*

Moreover, do not they who run into ways of schism hinder discipline, and bring contempt upon authority, and weaken it, and so make *great liberty* for all the *vices* and *scandals* of wicked men, by a consequent impunitie? And thus are they not guilty of increasing *those sins* in *others*, which they *themselves complain of*, because they disrespect and weaken that Authority, whether of Magistrates or Ministers, which might otherwise restrain or reform them.

Besides, are not all divisions, hatreds, animosities, and such like *filthinesses of the spirit*, which are to the tearing and rending of the
Church,

Church , most *passionately disclaimed* by our Saviour and his Apostles : And do we not find in *S^t Jude v. 19.* *Separation* joyn'd with a *wanting* of the *Spirit of Christ* ? Surely they who have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, they love the Church, Order, Discipline, Ordinances and Ministers of Christ , and will not easily be drawn from them. That *one spirit* of his inclines them to *unity*, and makes them fear *divisions* , as a man fears the mischief of dividing and wounding his own body. By *this* they feel such insufficiency and ignorance in themselves , that they rather think themselves exceedingly *beholden* to Ministers that will teach them, then *grudge* or *scorn* to be taught. And by the *same spirit* they have that sense of their own unworthiness, that humility, and that charity to others , that they are far readier to say , *we are not worthy to joyn with the Church* ; then to say , *The Church is not worthy to joyn with us*. Now that thy Soul may not be subverted with *error* , remember this in the first place, the great *impiety* of *separation* which it leads to.

2. *Beware of an itching ear after new-fangled opinions*. He is half gone to *error* that covets , and listens after *novelties*. We read of *itching eares*, *2 Tim. 4. 3, 4.* *For the time will*
come

come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves Teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. We read also of following after another Gospel, Gal. 1.6. But repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and sincere holy obedience, is that *Good old way* which we, with other Christians, must walk in to heavenly glory.

3. Take heed of pride, conceitedness, and confidence in thine own judgement or understanding. The humble God will teach, but he resists the proud, 1 Pet. 5. 5. Pride usually is the mother of heresies: it was of old the condemnation of the devil, 1 Tim. 3.6. the ruine of our first Parents; and therefore no wonder if it ruine so many Souls in these days.

4. That thy Soul may not be subverted with error, labour to be well grounded in the foundation-truths of the Christian religion, and to turn thy knowledge into practice. And to this end, be intreated to make good use of the foregoing Book, and especially, study the Scriptures with humility, and be much in prayer, that God would guide thee by his holy Spirit into all saving truth, and keep thee from falling into error. And remember, That what has
been

been commonly received by the people of God, and embraced and practised by the Saints in all ages, is not lightly to be rejected and deserted.

We agree with the first and best Christians, *We have the same God, the same Christ, the same Holy Ghost. We have the same Ministers, and Doctrine, and for the main, the same Worship, Discipline, Prayers, Praises, and Solemn Assemblies. We have the same Scriptures, the same Baptism, the same Lords-supper, Lords-day, Lords-prayer; as also the same Creed and Ten Commandments; We have, blessed be God, in many of us, the same holy and gracious disposition of heart which they had; and there is nothing in our holy religion hinders, but it may be so with the rest. Moreover there is no sin, which they disliked which we do not dislike; neither is there any duty of holiness, which they (or any other) could justly commend, which we do not also commend and allow, and by Gods grace many of us more safely practice, then those who accuse and separate from us. How can any rational man think God would leave the generality of his people in all ages and places thus seeking him, thus as careful of their Souls welfare as any other, thus as earnestly desiring to be led by his word and spirit into the ways of truth and holiness; how, I say, can any rational*
man

man imagine, that, till of late years, God would leave the *generality of his people* to errour and seduction of mind. And then consider with thy self, whether it be not *safer* to follow the *foot-steps of the flock of Christ*, then to be led away by *pretenders to any new light* whatsoever.

5. When *tempted* by cunning deceivers which thou art not able to grapple with, *seek the assistance of others*; That they may help thee to be *valiant for the truth*, and to *contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints*; and that both on thy own behalf, and for the benefit of posterity, *Jerem. 9. 3. Jude v. 3.* People are careful to leave their lands to their children; and should they not be much more careful to leave them the saving knowledge of God.

Gospel-truth is the treasure of the Soul; wilt thou then so *tamely* and *easily* part with it, or suffer those crafty persons that are now abroad to rob thee of it, without so much as repairing to those, who would help thee in the defence of it? If thou fearest the losse of any part of thy *estate* thou takest the *Lawyers* advice; If but thy *beast* be ill thou wilt *ask of others*; and if they direct thee to a cure in writing, which thou canst not read thy self; wilt thou not dili-

diligently get others to read it to thee again and again, till thou knowst what it is, and how to use it. Much more, if thy own, or thy child's bodily health be in danger, thou carefully consultest the *Physician*; why then art thou not willing, when thy own, or thy Relations Soul is much more in danger, to go to them for direction, whom God hath made by their office *spiritual Physicians* and *Guides* in the waies of *truth* and *holiness*; being ready to learn and practice the directions which they shall give thee?

Oh what a wretched thing is it, that people should so *contemn* their *own Souls*, as to part with their religion before they have *thoroughly understood* it; or before they have *sincerely* and *humbly* tried and practised it; or when they have only heard what is cunningly said *against* it, and not what may be truly and rationally *said for it*! Oh that any should be so unjust and cruel to their precious Souls, as prodigally to cast them away, and not take the pains to *hear* and *read* that, whereby they might come *rightly* to know the things which concern their everlasting peace!

6. That which I would chiefly, and in the last place intreat for thy *Souls safety* is this; *Expose not thy self to the temptations of Seducers.* The Soul is more precious then to be hazzarded

ded upon the mistaken sense of the Apostles words, *1 Thess. 5. 21.* To *trie all things* thou needst not be of *all religions* how false or dangerous soever. Among several poysons thou wouldst not trie any of them, whether it would kill thee or no. Therefore the meaning of this place must be, that we are to *examine* the Doctrines that are delivered unto us, *by the Scripture*, whether they are built thereon or no. Like the *Bareans* commended, *Acts 17. 11.* *who searched the Scriptures whether those things were so*, that were delivered to them *for the truths of God.*

And let that place, *Rom. 14. 1.* be considered by *all such* as are not thoroughly grounded in the Principles of Christianity. *Him that is weak in the faith, receive, but not to doubtful disputations.* Every private Christian is not fit to cope with hereticks, and *such as are skilful to destroy the faith of others.* You would not allow a man to come and *undermine* the foundation of your house; *This* do they, and *worse*, that go about to *undermine your Faith*, and labour to *shake and unsettle you* in the *grand truths* of the Gospel. Therefore I say again, Expose thy Soul as little as may be to the temptations of seducers. 'Tis in vain for any to pray to God to keep them from the *infection*
of er-

of error , if they wilfully (against the expresse word of God) and without any just warrant and call , run into the *company* of Seducers and *read their Books* .

Observe well , how God in the Scripture bids us , *To beware of them* , S^t Mat. 7. 15. *not to go after them* , S^t Luke 21. 8. *To avoid them* , Rom. 16. 17. *To turn away from them* , 2 Tim. 3. 5. *If they come to us , not to receive them , or bid them God speed* , or encourage them , 2 Ep. Joh. 10. *Though they come with seeming zeal* , Gal. 4. 17. *They zealously affect you , but not well ; Yea they would exclude us , that you might affect them* . Though they come with pretences of Gods Spirit , this they may easily do who are led by their own spirit or a worse. 2 Cor. 11. 3. *But I fear lest by any means , as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty , your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity , which is in Christ . v. 4. For if he that cometh , preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached , or if ye receive another spirit , which ye have not received , or another Gospel , which ye have not accepted , ye might well bear with him . v. 13. For such are false Prophets , deceitful workers , transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ . v. 14. And no marvel , for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of light ,*

light. v. 15. Therefore it is no great thing if his Ministers also be transformed as the Ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works. And to this we may adde but two Scriptures more and so finish this use. The one 2 Pet. 3. 17, 18. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The other Jude v. 24, 25. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his Glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, now and ever, Amen.

Use 4. Is the losse of the precious Soul so exceeding great and dreadful? How very careful then, so far as concern'd, should we be of the welfare and salvation of the Souls of others? And how fearful should we be to have any hand in their utter undoing? If thy friend, after thou hast warned him, will take such ways, as but to ruine his estate, dost thou not think it well, when thou canst say; praised be God, in that I am not guilty of it. Much more, if any of thy relations, neighbours, or acquaintance,

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after

after thou hast endeavoured thy duty towards them, will follow such courses, as to *ruine* their *precious Souls*, is it not a great mercy, when thou canst say; *blessed be the Lord, in that I have had no hand in it.*

In a Country, a Parish, a neighbour-hood, a family, by *setting a good example*, and so *furthering* the *work of Christ* in the hands of his Ministers; thou mayst not only benefit *thy self*, but be always doing good *to others*, as long as thou livest; and the Souls of those, whom, time after time, thou hast encouraged in the ways of holiness, may come to bless God for thee, and with thee for ever.

Whereas by shewing a *bad example*, thou *hindere*st the *messengers* of Christ in his work and service, and art continually doing mischief to *thy self*, and *others about thee*, all thy life long. And the perishing Souls which thou hast any way drawn to sin and ruine, may curse thee eternally, as a *wretched miscreant* doing more hurt, then if thou hadst ruined a whole Kingdome, as to the outward estate of it. Oh therefore if thou hast inticed any to sin, and they be yet a live, seek to do their Souls as *much good*, as thou hast been a *cause of evil*. But if they be dead, and swallowed up in the torments of Hell, think what a case thou art in,

in, and how justly thou mayst fear to follow them, if a *great repentance* prevent it not.

But this chiefly concerns those who in a more special manner are entrusted with the Souls of others, whether *Ministers*, or *Parents* and *Family governours*.

1. As for every *faithful Minister* of Christ, how exceeding careful should they be for the Souls committed to their charge? How exceeding careful should they be to *save themselves, and those that hear them*? And to keep themselves (as St Paul says he did) *pure from the blood of all men*.

'Tis true God hath made our *Calling* excellent and honourable; but people would see little cause to envy us that *double honour* of *respect* and *maintenance* which the Apostle would have given, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. did they rightly consider, how weighty our charge is, how dangerous our condition, how many and difficult our duties, and how troublesome our *fears* and *cares* touching the estate of their Souls.

I know some may think, we take more care *then needs*; wishing we would meddle less with them in their ignorant, careless, and secure ways; which we could *wish too*, if it would consist with Gods honour, the credit of religion,

religion, and their and our own safety. But, I beseech you, consider, if any of you was intrusted with a *Jewel* of five or ten thousand pound price, would you not see it needful to watch *all ways* and by *all means* to keep it safe and secure? and if you had *many such* in your custody, would you not be the more solicitous, especially if you saw they were in *continual danger*; and if further, you knew that if any of them should be lost by your default, you should certainly lose your life for it? But now, which is much more, we are entrusted with many, very many *precious Souls*, each of them more worth than a world; and they are, we see, in great and *apparent danger* to be ruined for ever, by manifold error and wickedness, and by innumerable temptations of the flesh, the devil, and the world; and we know moreover, that if any of them perish through *our neglect*, our *own Souls* may come to perish with them, and for them; as was said to him who had one to keep, *1 Kings 20. 39, 42. If thou let this man go, or be missing, thy life shall go for his life.* Have we not then need to be watchful to the uttermost of our power, and to be carefull all the ways we can, for their *safety* and *preservation*? Consider well *Acts 20. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27.* -- *Ye know after what manner I have been*
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with you at all seasons , serving the Lord with all humility of mind , and with many tears and temptations which befell me. -- And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you , but have shewed you , and have taught you , publickly and from house to house ; Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks , repentance towards God , and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore I take you to record this day , that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsell of God : and Ezek. 3. 17, 18, 19, 20. 21. as also Ezek. 33. 2, to 9. O son of man , I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel : therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth , and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked , O wicked man thou shalt surely dye : If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way , that wicked man shall die in his iniquity : but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless , if thou warn the wicked of his way , to turn from it ; if he do not turn from his way , he shall die in his iniquity ; but thou hast delivered thy Soul. If we be faithful , as every honest man should be in his trust , we may (you see) deliver our own Souls ; but if we be negligent watchmen , there are these things (among many others) which will sadly aggravate our condemnation.

1. When admitted to *places of imployment*, we take upon us the *cure of Souls* for their edification and salvation.

2. That we may attend this care the better, we *receive a benefit piously given* to free us from all other cares.

3. In order to this (I mean, the care of Souls for their edification and Salvation) our Masters and Tutors instructed us ; and our parents *devoted us* to the service of Christ.

4. To this too, we *devoted* and gave up our selves, professing or hoping, that we were thereunto *inwardly called* and *moved* by the Holy Ghost.

5. For this end we have also been *outwardly called*, or set apart by the Church for the *work of the Ministry*.

6. Moreover when ordained we did solemnly promise and engage this way to bend our studies, and to use both *publick and private monitions and exhortations*, as well to the sick, as to the *whole* within our *cures*, as need should require and occasion be given.

7. And which we may adde in the last place, we were then by the *Bishop ordaining*, most gravely charged, and exhorted, in these words: *Brethren, we exhort you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance, in*
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how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge ye are called: That is to say, to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and to provide for the Lords family; to seek for Christs sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his Children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.

Have alwaies therefore printed in your remembrance how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which he bought with his death, and for whom he shed his blood. The Church and Congregation whom you must serve, is his Spouse and his Body. And if it shall happen, the same Church, or any member thereof, to take any hurt or hindrance by reason of your negligence; ye know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue. Wherefore consider with your selves the end of your Ministry towards the Children of God, towards the spouse and body of Christ; and see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, untill you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden datie, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you,

either for error in religion, or viciousness of Life.

Now after all this, If we do *our utmost* for the Souls health of them committed to our charge; if we leave no good means thereof unattempted; If we should labour for this *night and day with tears*, as the Apostle says he did; If we should never so often and earnestly beseech you to practice the fore going *printed Directions* put into your hands, and what ever Christian duties our Saviour requires of us; If we should follow you from the *Church-house* to your *own houses* (if no better could be) with the most passionate intreaties, as for the life of our own Souls and yours; who could *justly* think us *too importunate*? who could *reasonably* count us *too earnest* or *too busie*? who could *justly blame* us for making more a do then needs? for all this would be *but enough* as to some, and as to others it would be *too little*.

2. *Parents and Family-governours*, how carefully should they look to it, lest any *under them* should perish by *their negligence or wickedness*. Be assured Christ will ere long say to th e, as *Eliab to David*, *with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?* *what are become of those precious Souls of thy Children or*
Ser-

Servants which I intrusted thee with ? Nor will it be enough for thee only to answer , For my children , I brought them up without the charge of the Parish ; I put them out to trades , or I left them competent estates or portions. And as for my servants , I paid them their wages , and gave them meat and drink according to my agreement with them. For all this , chiefly respects but the body ; and thy heart would be filled with horror , if the blood of their Souls should be required of thee.

Oh the cry of a *lost Soul* is a dreadful thing. Suppose any of *thy Servants* should now be in hell *curving the time* that ever they came into thy family , where they saw so much wickedness , where there was no worshiping of God , or means to come to the knowledge of him , whereupon they went on securely in sin , and are now swallowed up in the bottomless pit of destruction. Or suppose any of *thy children* following thy steps in wickedness , and contemning Gods word and worship as they saw thee do , should now be sunk down to eternal misery , there *curving the day* that ever they were born of such a Parent , or *crying out against thee* for neglecting them , for suffering them to swear , lye , and do evil without severe rebukes , for letting them prophane the Lords-day , for
neither

neither instructing them thy self, nor causing them to be instructed by others in the waies of God.

Were this so, it might make the most *flinty heart* to ake and tremble. Therefore that it may never be so *with thee*, resolve duly to promote godliness in thy family however thou standest therein related. *Dwell with thy wife as a man of knowledge, as heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered, 1 Pet. 3. 7.* Labour that thy *servants* may know and *serve God*; they will be to thee *more faithfull*. Bring up thy *children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; they will be to thee *more dutifull*. Pray with them, and for them, put them upon *learning such verses of Scripture* as will further their *holy walking*.

Encourage all under thy roof to *observe better the Lords day*. Suffer them not to mispend so much of that precious time in such idle, trifling, and unlawful practices as too many do. Thou hadst need chuse a *right path* that hast thy servants, and children, or others near thee, following thee to *heaven or hell*. Be therefore exact in thy *actions*, that they may have the *fairer copy* to write after.

Weigh thy *words*, considering that they will learn thy language. Remember that *Faith* and

and *Treth* sound not so well as *yea* and *nay*, our Saviour being Judge, *S^t Mat. 5.37.* Be afraid to have the *Devil* so often in *thy mouth*, lest others about thee have him, both in *their tongue* and their *heart too*. Repeat not others oaths, nor speak irreverently of the great God and his Word: *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of thy lips*, but that which *some ways* tends to good.

In all thy religious performances be very serious and sincere, that they may see thou art in *good earnest* about Soul-affairs, and matters of eternity. Oh be careful *thus* if it be possible, by thy *pious exhortations*, thy *devout prayers*, and thy *exemplary behaviour* to bring the Souls of all under thee, and near thee, unto Christ. And make that still thine, which once was good *Jeshua's* resolution and practice, *Josh. 24. 15.* *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

Use 5. Is each ones Soul of so great worth, and the losse of it to *them* so dreadful and undoing, as not to be recompenced with the gaining of the whole world? See then further how *exceeding careful* we should every one of us be of our own Souls; and how we may not always count them the happiest people, who have all worldly things here for a while that *heart can*
wish,

wish; but those rather who are most careful of their precious Souls everlasting happiness in the world to come.

Now if thou wouldst understand, whether thou thy self art herein *rightly careful*, or no; thou mayst know it by looking to the *sincerity* of thy *conversion*, or thy due care of *believing such truths*, *exercising such graces*, and *performing such duties as God requires of all regenerate Christians*. And which thou mayst find set down in the *Directions*, *Questions* and *Answers* of the foregoing Book, especially from page 84 to page 93. As also in the *prayers* thereof, which teach us at once both *what to ask*, and *what to do*, and *be*, in order to the Souls eternal welfare. For having such prayers to use, we may study our petitions before, and so the *sense* of our *minds* may keep pace with our *words*; and our *affections* go along with our *sense*. Thus Gods Spirit assisting, our devotion would be enlivened; and our prayers become the *rule* of our *conversation*; & when we swarve from them, they would make us blush into amendment.

But more *particularly*, to know that thou art in *good earnest* desirous to save thy Soul.

1. Being Christ the Physician of Souls works not a cure upon *one every whit whole*, nor is prized by them that feel no need of him,

St Mat.

St Mat. 9. 12, 13. hast thou had an *imbittering* sense of the evil and danger of sin , and an *humbling sight* of thy Souls lost condition by nature , as fallen from God , and inordinately set upon worldly vanities ? Hast thou seen that this is not a state to be rested in , and therefore been solicitous after a better , carefully in effect asking like them, *Acts 2. 37.* *what shall I do to be saved ?*

2. Hast thou hereupon been *heartily willing* to receive Christ as offered in the Gospel , for thy *Lord* , as well as thy *Jesus or Saviour* ? And *as thy Lord* , dost thou yield to the sanctifying work of his word and spirit ? and art thou so guided by his Laws , as ordinarily to practice the most strict , holy , costly , and self-denying duties which thou knowest him to require of thee ?

And again *as thy Jesus* , dost thou feel the *power of his death killing sin in thee* ? doth he by his bloodshed not only *pardon* thy sins , but also *save and deliver thee* from them ? so that thou heartily strivest against all known sin , and overcomest all grosse sins ; and when fallen under any prevailing temptation , risest again by repentance , begging forgiveness of God in his blood , and resolving by his grace to watch and resist more carefully for the time to come ?

Acts

Acts 16. 30, 31. *Ezek.* 36. 25, 26, 27, *Acts* 3, 26 *Tit.* 2. 11, 12, 14.

3. Art thou so sensible of what Christ *thy Redeemer* hath done and suffered for thee, and of thy many engagements to him upon that account, as to *love him above all*, and constantly to *cleave unto him* in every condition. And hath Christ so brought thee *back again* to God, that thou takest him for thy portion and lovest him with *all thy heart, Soul and strength*, and chusest to live with him in his favour and glory, without sinning, or offending him any more; rather then sinfully to enjoy the delights of the world, and want the favour of God? *Eph.* 6. 24. *Phil.* 3. 8. *S^t Mat.* 22. 38. *Psa.* 73. 25, 26, 27, 28.

4. Moreover art thou so convinced of the *Souls worth*, and the *worlds vanity*; of the *certainty* and *excellency* of heavenly glory, and the *intollerableness* of eternal misery; of the goodness of the Divine precepts, and the need of obeying them; art thou (I say) *so convinced of this*, as sincerely to set thy self to perform *all those holy spiritual duties* in heart and life, which God hath absolutely commanded thee; being sorry thou canst perform them no better, no more evenly, and chearfully; yet holding on with a *settled resolution*, and a *constant spirit*,
to do

to do thy best , though with thy present losse
of esteem , or ease , or worldly enjoyments, or
life it self? *Hebr.* 11. 25, 26. 1 *John* 5. 3.
Psa. 19. 11. *Rom.* 2. 6, 7. *S^t Mat.* 10. 37, 38, 39.

If *this* be *thy* condition thou *rightly* prizest thy
Soul above the world , and providest for its
welfare ; but if it *be not* ; oh how earnestly
shouldst thou labour that it may *speedily* be so !
Delays are dangerous , and thou hast too long
dishonoured God , and hazarded thy Soul al-
ready ; shouldst thou go on in *presumption* and
security , might not the Lord be provoked to
cut thee off suddenly ? or give thee up to a
spirit of slumber and stupidity ? Or leave thee
to thy self, to follow thy *own hearts lusts* ? Or
cause thy day of grace to end before thy na-
tural life ?

Or may not the love of the world be *deep-
lier rooted* hereafter , and the incumbrances of
it *hinder thee more* , as it hath done too many
before thee. As for some of the *meaner sort* ,
which it may be , do not so much as learn to
read in their younger years , or if they do, soon
forget it again , without making up *that want*
by their diligence other ways ; when they are
grown to any bigness , either they are set to
trades or otherwise to work for a livelihood.
And when they come to be settled in the
world,

world, and to have *wife* and *children*, then they have no heart, or leasure, to mind the welfare of the Soul; but think all their time, labours, thoughts, and strength little enough to provide a *bodily sustenance* for themselves and families.

And if they live to be *aged*, though we would take never so much pains to *teach* and *guide* them in the ways of Christ, they (some of them) think themselves *too old* now to learn; and are too deep rooted in their own secure and sensual ways, to be drawn to forsake them, without little lesse then a miracle. And though they have all their lives the *gracious opportunities*, of the *whole Lords-day*, yet they spend the most of it in idle talk, or sports, or trifling worldly occasions; and if they chance upon a faire day, to come now and then to Church, for an hour or two; yet it is but in a *customary manner*, without considering seriously what they hear, or come thither for; and so they spend their days in sorrow and vanity, and *passee out* of the *world*, before they know that great and good and *blessed errand* they were sent hither about.

And as for some others, when they should resolve to forsake every wilful sin, and unfeignedly devote themselves to the service of
God,

God, and mind the *one thing necessary*; how is some or other of those many unnecessary things which they trouble themselves about, still ready to stand in their way? *Either they* are eating or drinking, sleeping or playing, dressing or undressing, or have some whither to go, or some body to speak with, or some bargain to drive, or some work or company which they cannot leave, *Or they* are casting in their heads how to disintangle their estates, or raise their families, or to avoid the Crosse-blows of their adversaries.

Or else they are under violent sickness that unfits them for action; or some disappointment, or quarrel, or law-suit, or some such *trouble* hath befallen them which puts their minds *out of order*; or some *worldly success* and prosperity which puffs them up with a foolish flashy joy. *Or they* have some brave things in expectation which they are musing on, and pleasing themselves with before hand, till they find themselves deceived, when they feel *that sting* which they bring with them in their enjoyment. How do such matters as these fill the *heads and hearts* of many from year to year; in the *morning* they crowd first into *their thoughts*; and when they are *up*, they accordingly set

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about

about one or other of them, or fall into some company which takes them up for *that day*, and the like happens *to morrow* and the *next day*; thus still the multiplicity of *earthly cares*, prevail against the *care of their Souls*; and the love of their sins and pleasures, still prevails against the love of God; and for many *superfluous* things, *any time* is thought *convenient*, but *none* is found *convenient* for the one thing necessary, till it come to be too late; so that the fore-mentioned Soul-saving work must cease for ever.

Oh therefore let it (I say) be done *speedily*, and withal *sincerely* and *thoroughly*; or else the losse of the Soul may have these further aggravations; to be *wilful* and *shameful*, *unexpected* and *unpitied*, *incomparable* and *irrecoverable*.

I. It will be a *wilful losse*. *St John 5. 40. Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life. Ezek. 33. 11. Turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?* It is a great vexation to a man in this world to see himself ruined meerly by his own wilfulness: but if thou shouldst obstinately destroy thy self to eternity; suppose, by thy *wilful ignorance*, when thou mightest have been taught better; or by

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or by any *wicked courses*, when thou wast advised better; oh what inexpressible anguish will seize upon thy perishing Soul for ever!

2. It will be a *shameful losse*. What can follow but confusion of face, when thou shalt see thy neighbours and acquaintance *most happy*, and thy self *most miserable*? What a grievous shame will it be to hear some of those that lived near thee, or with thee, joyfully praising God; and as it were pointing to thee, and saying, *Loe, this is the man, or the woman, that made not God their stay*. They had the same word, the same means with us, but they loved their *sins* more then their *Souls* or God; and therefore while we are raised to *everlasting life*, they are layd under *shame and everlasting contempt*.

3. It will be an *unpitied losse*. If thou lovest a friend, or liberty or livelihood, 'tis a comfort, that thou mayst find those who will *pity* and *condole* with thee, and be ready to supply thy necessities; but if thou lovest thy Soul, in that sad condition thou wilt have none to help or *pity thee*. Now the gracious God and merciful Redeemer of the world, and all good Christians *pity thee*, but thou *pitieest not thy self*, nor wilt leave thy sins to save thy Soul; shall not

then the very mercies of God and bowels of Christ be hereafter most justly turned *against thee*? and shall not the Saints and Angels, be so far from *pitying*, as rather *with rejoycing* to glorifie Gods Justice in thy utter destruction?

4. It will be an *unexpected losse*. How grievous to *cry peace*, and then be overtaken with trouble, and sudden destruction *unawares*? *Prov. 29. 1.* How grievous to *lose* thy Soul, when perhaps thou wert near the *saving* it? or when thou groundlessly flatteredst thy self, thinking thou shouldest do well enough? what *amazement* seiseth on that mans spirit, who being in a fair way of thriving, hears *unexpected news*, that all he had is lost and gone?

5. It will be an *incomparable losse*. *What will it profit a man though he gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul?* It will be a *great losse* for a *small matter*; the losse of that which is most precious for that which is most vile, shouldst thou set thy Soul to fail, not for a few pence, or a lye, or a base lust, but for a kingdome or a world, thou wouldest be such a *loser*, as to be *utterly undone* by the bargain.

6. It will be an *irreparable*, and so an *eternal losse*. If thou lovest one eye, thou hast another; if thou lovest one limb, thou hast another.

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If thou losest thy goods thou mayst recover them again ; or if thou losest *thy life* , thou mayst be a gainer by it, thou mayst *find it again*, Mat. 16. 25. but if thou losest thy *Soul* , thou hast not *another* , and *all* is lost with it , and *nothing* left to redeem it. Thy Soul *once lost* is *lost for ever* ; and its ruine is most lamentable, because irrecoverable. If thou missest *at death*, thou missest *for ever* and *for ever* ; there is no aftergame to be play'd , but thou must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. If the great work for which thou wert born be not then *done* , thou art *undone* to all eternity. *O eternity, eternity !* they that here could never have enough of the world and sin, in thee shall have wrath enough , and pain enough. After a thousand millions of years space their misery shall be never the nearer *an end* , because it shall have *none* , being easless, endless, remedyless.

What shall a man give in exchange for his Soul ? why there is *nothing at all* he can give in exchange for it ; the redemption of it is so precious , that it ceaseth for ever. Oh that the *careless world* did but believe and consider the word of God , and in particular, these words of our Saviour , *surely they would*

mind their Souls otherwise then now they do.

Therefore, *good Reader*, be intreated not only to suffer others who are, or may be intrusted with the care of thy Soul, to be *very solicitous* for the welfare thereof; but be thou as careful too thy self, resolving as he did, who sayd, *volo servare animam meam*, *I will, O God, by all means save my Soul.* Say with thy self, and look up unto God for his grace and spirit to enable thee, to say it sincerely; *O Lord, I am sensible of the evil of my ways, and of my lost condition without thee; and therefore with a penitent Soul I flee unto thee, trusting in thy mercy, and the merits of thy dear Son Jesus Christ. I believe him making satisfaction to thy Justice for the sins of the world, to be the only Saviour thereof; and thereupon, with the full consent of my heart, I accept him for my Lord-Redeemer; to save me henceforth, as well from the power, as the guilt of my sins. I am unfeignedly willing, that henceforth he should rule in me, and reign over me by his word and spirit. I am, O God, willing to be saved through him, in forbearing to my utmost, all that evil which thou hast forbidden; in using all those ordinances which thou hast instituted; in performing all those duties which thou hast commanded;*
and

and in doing to my utmost all that good which thou hast required. And I further resolve by thy grace assisting, so to love thee, and believe in thee my God and Saviour, as henceforth while breath is continued, to serve, please, worship, and glorifie thee, all that I can, and all the ways that I can.

If thou hast thus resolved heretofore, yet do it again, and do it often in the course of thy life; it cannot set thee back at all in thy gracious estate, it may and will much further and quicken thee in thy holy walking. Such an earnest care of thy Souls welfare let it be thy principal care, because, among others, it may have these deserved commendations, to be *holy* and *easy*, *safe* and *successesful*, *prudent* and *profitable*.

1. It is an *holy care*, making them that have it desirous to be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness.

2. 'Tis a *prudent care*, being most earnest for that which is most precious, and best deserves it. He in the parable might be justly commended for his *wisdome*, who cared not so much what became of *other things*, so he might obtain the *pearle* which was of great price, and purchase the field which had a *rich treasure* hidden therein.

3. 'Tis a *blessed and successful care*. Many are at much care and pains for the world, but *all in vain*; but here Christ hath made such provision by the covenant of grace, that if we sincerely believe in him, and endeavour to be in *will, word and deed*, what he requires, we shall *without fail* obtain the end of our faith, even the salvation of our Souls.

4. 'Tis a *safe and satisfactory care*. And if thy Soul be *first* set a right God-ward and heaven-ward, if thou art *first* devoted unto Christ, steadfastly purposing to observe his word and will in all things; thou mayst in the *next place*, mind that which concerns thy ingenuous education, or the works of thy *honest calling* more *seasonably, piously and regularly*; and by far *more safely* then others can do. For who can with such safety and comfort, follow those studies or labours which concern the preservation of life, or their *natural welbeing*; as they who have first made sure as to the *main stake*, that which concerns their *everlasting well-being*?

Others, though in the strongest castle, or highest dignity, are not free from the danger of hell one minute of an hour. But such as these, God will keep as the apple of the eye, and *none can take them out of Christs hands*,
S^r Fohn

St John 10. 28, 29. Deut. 33. 27. Zach. 2. 8.
 They may say upon good grounds, *our Souls are safe to eternity, our salvation we shall not misse of, and other things we shall have too, as God seeth best for our spiritual good, and his own glory, Mat. 6. 33.*

5. The care of the Soul is *comparatively an easie care.* 'Tis the ready way to provide also for our *bodily welfare*, not only *hereafter*, but for the most part, *here too.* Religious temperance is cheap and healthful. *Exod 23. 25. Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall blesse thy bread and thy water, and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.* We are sure that the *body* hath no annoyance which we can prevent; and for *that* the most trades are followed with restless care and toyle; but certainly the *Soul* being much more precious, deserves the far greater diligence. Yet, be but at *half* that *pains* to do well, which others are at, who *weary themselves* in doing evil; take but half that care for thy precious Soul, which some do about the affairs of the body, and thou mayst be most happy for ever.

6. *And lastly,* 'tis a *delightful and profitable care*, and that as to whatever befalls the Christian either in *this life* or *that to come.* If
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in *this* life God give *prosperity*, *this* care of the Soul will make thee use all outward blessings soberly and temperatly. *This* will make thee ready to honour God with them by works of piety and charity, *Prov. 3. 9.* *This* will make thee endeavour to enjoy God in all such enjoyments; and to tast in their sweetness the sweetness of his love in Christ Jesus. And thus thy *earthly comforts* will prove *doubly comfortable*, and thy gaining in the world become the greatest gain to the Soul.

Or if God send *adversity*, *this* will make all thy troubles and calamities to work together for thy good. He that *lost all* by shipwrack, and then was more careful for his Soul and eternity, sayd well, *I had been undone, if I had not been undone.* The world by its hard using of Gods servants, gets nothing; nor do their Souls lose any thing. If it turn our breath into sighs and groans, we shall with the Apostle, *2 Cor. 5. 2. groan more earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.*

And *after death* the holy Soul cannot but be well. Christ who hath redeemed it, and prepared heaven for it, and it for heaven, will thither receive it unto himself, where *joyntly* with the *glorified body*, it shall be most happy for evermore.

Thus,

Thus, *my beloved neighbours* ; you have seen the Souls *worth and danger* , and *what care* we should have of its eternal salvation ; to which end , you have nothing urged but such solid and weighty *truths and duties* , as are *generally owned* , and *manifestly tend* to make us *holy and happy*. And now , though I be separated from all troublesome affairs, that I may thus *wholly attend the welfare and service of your Souls* ; and though my eternal life lies ont, as indeed *yours too* , I can do no more then what I have been endeavouring , and am further , according to this printed gift , ready to do for you. The things herein contained , still abide to be *read and considered* by you , as often as you please ; but if any be *unwilling* thereunto, *slighting and refusing* whatever may *thus profit them* , *who can help it* ?

How many of those who saw the miracles, and heard the *sermons* of our Blessed Saviour *himself* , and his holy *Apostles* , continued *unconverted* ? with what unwearied patience and diligence did the great Evangelical Prophet *Isaiah* preach above sixty years together , to a rebellious and a gain saying people ? *Isa. 63. 2. Rom. 10. 21.* Their profitings for a long time, did

did not answer his labours among them ; but he might comfort himself with a remarkable passage in his own prophecy, *Iſa. 49. 4, 5. Then I ſaid,* (the words are meant chiefly of Chriſt ſent to the Jews and complaining of them) *I have laboured in vain, I have ſpent my ſtrength for nought, and in vain, yet ſurely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work (or my reward) with my God. And now ſaith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his ſervant, to bring Jacob again to him. Though Iſrael be not gathered, yet ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God ſhall be my ſtrength. God will reward his faithful ſervants both according to what they have done, and moreover according to what they truly deſired and endeavoured to do. If a few, if but any one be really advantaged by what I am endeavouring, I ſhall count my labour well beſtowed;* as 'tis ſaid of the reverend and learned *D^r Hammond*, a paſſionate Lover of Souls, that he uſed often to break out in theſe words with an extraordinary vehemence. *O what a glorious thing, how rich a prize for the expence of a mans whole life, were it, to be the inſtrument of reſcuing any one Soul ?*

But (which I often and humbly pray) if God ſhall bow the hearts of *more*, making us all a
willing

willing people in the day of his power ; making us seriously mind our Souls salvation in the fore-mentioned ways of true Christian piety ; oh how greatly should we rejoyce in his goodness , and in one anothers happines ! O how blessed a thing would it be , when the Lord our maker should thus have the Souls which he hath created , and be glorified by them ; when Christ our Saviour should thus have the immortal spirits which he hath redeemed , and be magnified in them ; when further his unworthy servant should come thus to have the fruit of his ministerial labours ; and you your selves to have the comfort and everlasting gain.

F I N I S.

